Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter

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Newsletter Update

This is the initial installment of the newsletter for 2010. The first newsletter is a little later than in previous years – I think everything is off schedule this year. I keep telling folks that, despite we are in May, I am not ready for 2010! As in previous years, the target day of the week for email delivery to your inbox remains each Thursday, allowing time for incorporating news of the week. If you would like to be removed from the email distribution list that will receive these weekly newsletters, or if you know of someone else who would like to be included, please let me know (greene4@clemson.edu).

Pest Patrol Hotline

Again this year there will be a toll-free hotline for quick updates on insect problems. I will update the short message weekly for at least as long as the newsletter runs. Simply call the free number **(877) 285-8525** and select the messages you would like to hear. The hotline is sponsored by Syngenta Crop Science.

News from Above the Lakes

This section will again serve as a place where I will include comments from any and all that submit information about the state of cotton or soybeans and the insect situation in their local area from "above the lakes". I am intending for this to serve as a hub for statewide information. These sections of the newsletter would be more valuable if more external contributions were submitted regularly. Please send me your observations and comments mid-week! Wednesday contributions would be perfect.

Thanks to Trish DeHond, agent covering Darlington, Dillon, and Marlboro Counties, for the following about free recycling of pesticide containers. Farmers, agribusiness & green industry professionals: Just a reminder that US Ag Recycling is set up to pick up your empty pesticide containers at no cost. To recycle EMPTY pesticide containers, call 1-800-654-3145 or request pick up by completing the online form at http://www.usagrecycling.com/form.htm. U.S. Ag. Recycling will recycle your properly rinsed plastic crop protection product containers free of charge.

Preparing your containers :
To be acceptable for recycling, plastic crop protection product containers must be empty, clean, uncapped, and dry. Follow this checklist to make sure your containers are acceptable, and then compare them with the samples here. To prepare your containers, see proper rinsing techniques online at:
http://www.usagrecycling.com/rinse.html

News from Below the Lakes

Same as above, but pertaining to news in the southern part of the state. Most calls so far have been about problems with grasshoppers. Grasshoppers are pretty sensitive to numerous insecticides, so control of populations that get sprayed is good. However, re-infestation is another issue. Additional generations move into the field shortly after a treatment, making previous applications seem ineffective. Pyrethroids and OPs provide good control of grasshoppers, but be prepared for re-infestation. The best approach for grasshoppers is to prevent severe infestations by keeping field borders (ditches, fallow areas, etc) clean by mowing and to make sure your burn-downs are not too late. Tall grasses and weeds are where the grasshoppers get their start. If these areas are allowed to grow unchecked and naturally/slowly dry down after planting or they are rapidly killed in the field with burn-down sprays, grasshoppers will move into crops. An insect growth regulator, such as Dimilin at 2 oz/acre, will provide good control of immature grasshoppers, and it can be sprayed in non-crop areas also. Dimilin will have no impact on grasshoppers with wings (adults); only the immature stage is affected.

Jonathon Croft, agent covering Berkeley and Dorchester Counties, reported that he is seeing some "thrips damage" but not many thrips in cotton at this point. He also noted that what soybeans are up look good, but everything is dependent on the recent rains that were very variable across his area.

Cotton Situation

Planting was well underway until we ran out of moisture. Temperatures have been high, so many were starting earlier this year. Anything that was planted back in late April or early May is up and going. The rains last weekend and this week have certainly helped. Projections on acreage for 2010 are guessed at below; they remain dynamic. Here is where we have been for the last six years on cotton acreage in SC and where USDA-NASS stands on the 2010 estimate. This positive estimate puts us back to about our acreage in 2007.

Year	Planted Acres (PA)	% Difference (PA) from Previous Year	Harvested Acres	Yield (lb lint/acre)
2004	215,000	-	214,000	875
2005	266,000	+24%	265,000	743
2006	300,000	+13%	298,000	697
2007	180,000	-40%	158,000	486
2008	135,000	-25%	134,000	881
2009	115,000	-15%	114,000	872
2010	175,000?	+52%?	-	-

The Last Year for Bollgard

Varieties with original Bollgard technology (i.e. DP 555, etc.) purchased by 30 September of 2009 can be planted up until 1 July 2010, when registration for original Bollgard expires. The only varieties with Bt technology that will be available after that date will be those that contain more than one Bt gene (multiple Bt toxins), such as Bollgard II and WideStrike varieties that are commercially available now.

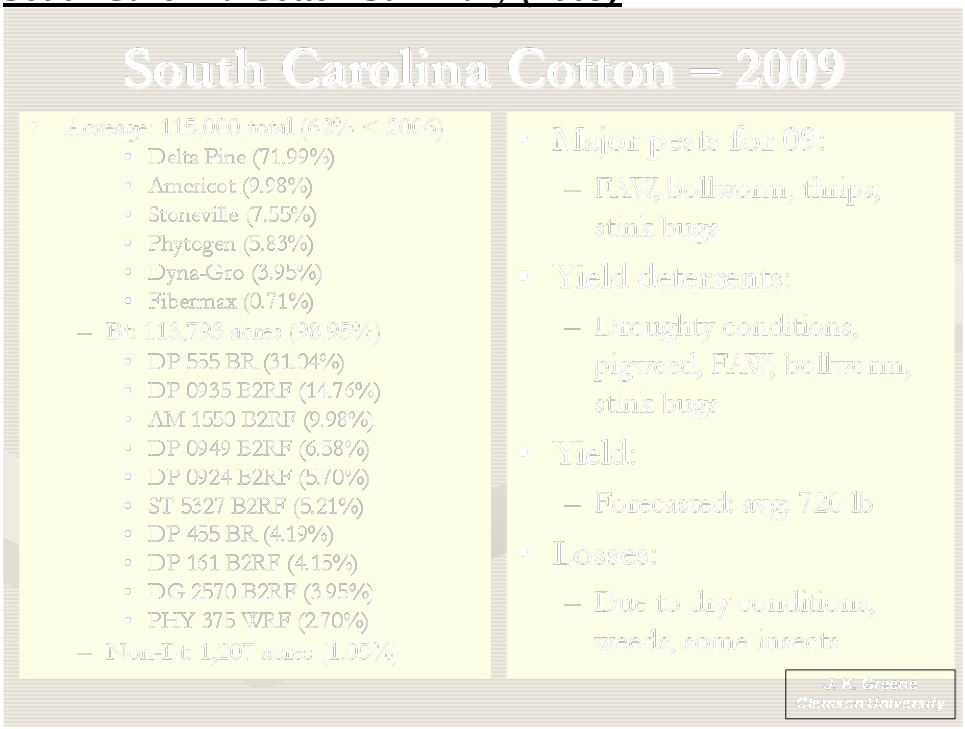
Management of Thrips/Nematodes in Cotton

Although most decisions about what preventative materials will be used for control/suppression of thrips and nematodes have already been made, here are a few suggestions. Because our soils are favorable for nematodes, soil sampling is a must in order to know what levels (and what species) are in each field. This should be the first piece of information gathered. Your choices of preventative pesticides should depend upon the level of nematodes in each field. A nematicide such as Telone is needed where infestations are heavy, but if levels of nematodes are moderate to light, other products, such as Temik or a seed treatment (i.e. Avicta Complete Pak or Aeris plus Trilex), will offer suppression of nematodes and thrips.

Cotton Insect Control Guide

Clemson University Publication IC97 (Cotton Insect Management) has been revised for 2010 and is available free from your local county office. It is also available online at:
http://www.clemson.edu/psapublishing/PAGES/ENTOM/IC97.pdf

South Carolina Cotton Summary (2009)



Cotton was planted on about 115,000 acres in South Carolina during 2009. That was a reduction of another 15% from that planted in 2008. Most of the reduction was again due to increased acreage planted to corn and soybeans, presumably because of low cotton prices and high values for soybeans and corn. About 99% of cotton acres were planted with varieties containing Bt technology during 2009. Average yield for the state was pretty good and much better than early predictions (720 lb). Early-season insect problems were characterized by moderate levels of thrips and concerns about grasshoppers. Mid-to-late-season insect problems consisted mostly of stink bugs, fall armyworm, and bollworm (FAW problems were confined to non-Bt and Bollgard varieties primarily). Populations of secondary pests such as aphids, spider mites, etc, were generally not problematic. Overall, Bt cotton performed well in suppressing bollworm numbers, but all Bt technologies needed supplemental applications of insecticide under situations of extreme pressure. Overall for 2009, yield losses were due mostly to less-than-perfect weather conditions, but conditions resulted in very good yields (estimated at 872 lb/acre), far exceeding earlier projections.

Soybean Situation

Planting projections for soybeans are down slightly from 2009.

Year	Planted Acres (PA)	% Difference (PA) from Previous Year	Harvested Acres	Yield (bushels/acre)
2004	540,000	-	530,000	27.0
2005	430,000	-20%	420,000	20.5
2006	400,000	-7%	390,000	29.0
2007	460,000	+15%	440,000	18.5
2008	540,000	+17%	530,000	32.0
2009	590,000	+9.2%	565,000	24.5
2010	560,000	-5.0%	-	-

Soybean Insect Control Guide

Clemson University Publication SL1 (Soybean Insect Management) has been revised for 2010 and is available free from your local county office. It is also available online at:
http://www.clemson.edu/psapublishing/PAGES/AGRO/SL1.pdf

Dimilin and Boron on Soybeans

Recent correspondence about the use of Dimilin and boron on soybeans by my colleagues across the Southeast and Midsouth were interesting. If I were summarize the commentary briefly and correctly, the protection from VBC and other caterpillar pests offered by Dimilin in the most southern regions is justified. In more northern areas of the Southeast and Midsouth, where those caterpillar complexes can be much less important, the benefits of Dimilin were much less. Many trials have also looked at applying boron to soybeans, and some have reported improvements in yield and others have observed no "bump" in yield with the addition of boron. Basically, the addition of boron was characterized as provided inconsistent results; although it was pointed out that there could be an interaction with soil type.

Pest Management Handbook - 2010

Insect control recommendations are also available online in the 2010 Pest Management Handbook at:
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/rowcrops/pest/index.html

Need More Information?

Log on to the following web pages to view important cotton management recommendations, data, and historical cotton insect newsletters:
http://www.clemson.edu/public/rec/edisto/research/cotton.html
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/rowcrops/cotton/index.html

Sincerely,

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